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far from the MS reading as *σπεύσω* (Martin, Heimsoeth), *ἔρπω* (Schneider), *κίω* (Zakas). Turnebus' *πείσω* is precluded by the sense.

It seems to me that ΠΙΕΤΩ was originally ΦΟΙΤΩ. The error was due, in the first place, probably to a *Sprachfehler*, and in a very early period, when the word was pronounced π'οιτῶ. Then by iotacism this became *πιετῶ*, whence, by an inadvertent metathesis of vowels, *πιετῶ*.

For the meaning compare I 10, *φοῖτα κηρύκεσσι κελεύων*; B 779, *φοίτων ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κατὰ στρατόν*; M 266, *κελευσιώνωντ' παντόσε φοιτήτην*; E.M. 797, 44, *σημαίνει τὸ ὁρμῶ καὶ παραγίνεται*. This verb, too, fits in well with the plural *λαούς* (*τοὺς πολίτας ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα*).

J. E. HARRY

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

PLAUTUS *Amph.* 551 FF. AND SIMULTANEOUS ACTION IN ROMAN COMEDY

In the considerable amount of recent writing on ancient stage conventions, the technique of continuous action, the dramatic unities, and other related themes, I have not observed that attention has been called to one small detail of exercise of imagination required by the playwright of the spectator. The *Amphitruo* of Plautus will furnish a convenient example of the matter I have in mind. In vss. 551-632 *Amphitruo* and *Sosia* wrangle on the stage about the slave's incredible report of a double of himself who has sent him away with a flea in his lug from *Amphitruo's* house, to which he had been dispatched from the harbor to announce the master's happy return from foreign parts and imminent arrival at his own home. In the verses that immediately follow (vss. 633-53) *Alcumena*, *Amphitruo's* wife, comes out of the door of the house, which evidently opens on the stage, and, standing there, soliloquizes for some moments on her own lot, with a few edifying moralizations at the end. When she concludes, *Amphitruo* and *Sosia* take up their talk again, without showing any signs of having seen or heard her. As they proceed, *Alcumena* observes them, and exclaims, "meus uir hic quidemst!" But her husband sees and hears nothing, merely telling *Sosia*, as he has done before, "sequere hac tu me." *Alcumena* interpolates a remark of surprise at *Amphitruo's* unexpected return after having bidden her farewell (as she supposes) that very morning. Then *Sosia* apparently sees her for the first time, and ventures upon some raillery with his yet unconscious master. Thereupon *Alcumena* comes forward to meet and greet him.

We are well acquainted in more modern drama with the somewhat stupid convention by which a character thinks aloud in an "aside" remark or a more extended soliloquy, whereby every man in the theater hears what must be supposed inaudible to the actor standing elbow to elbow with the speaker. This is common enough in the ancient drama also. *Alcumena's* monologue

and subsequent interpolated asides are samples of this demand upon the imagination of the auditor. But a further demand is made by Plautus in the passage under discussion. Amphitruo and his servant are of necessity represented as conversing on the stage within a few steps of the housdoor. But the conversation is suitable to the time and circumstances of their walk up to the city from the harbor. The repeated "sequere me" and its equivalents serve to mark and emphasize their progress along the street. But the setting of the stage, with its unchanging background, and the continuous action limit their actual, visible, and audible presence to the moment of their arrival at their goal, and their entire conversation must be carried on at this point. The auditor is required to draw on his imagination to extend it backward through the whole period of the journey from the port. Though the interlocutors stand and speak there close to the door, they must be conceived to be yet advancing at a considerable distance from it (cf., e.g., the running-scene in Plaut. *Trin.* 1008 ff.).

Furthermore we are evidently to understand that while the travelers are thus busily conversing as they walk forward, Alcumena comes out of the house and speaks her monologue. The two actions are simultaneous, though far separated in conceived space during part of the time. But the dramatist can help the audience to the necessary concept only by interrupting the dialogue of Amphitruo and Sosia to permit Alcumena to speak, and by supplying now and then a phrase to indicate time or motion (as in the "sequere me," etc.). We can only guess what "stage-business" the ancient actors used to help manufacture or support the required illusion. It must have been as insufficient as that accompanying "asides" nowadays. Equally futile and even confusing is the modern scene-division of the ancient verses.

I have set down this suggestion under a ponderous title, and with but a single illustration, in the thought that some young student might find it interesting to trace fully the technique and rationale of simultaneous action through ancient drama down into modern. It would seem to have some relation with the development of a strict act-and-scene division, and with the general question of dramatic unities in the wider sense. I have not thought it useful to point out or argue the particular matters in which I venture to differ from the views of Messrs. Ussing, Langen, Palmer, Leo, Prescott, Conrad, and others. I may only remark in conclusion that I see no sufficient reason for rejecting vss. 629-32, and most assuredly none for imagining that the playwright meant us to think of the dialogue between Amphitruo and Sosia in vss. 551-632 as taking place altogether at the harbor (while it was enacted actually before our eyes in front of Amphitruo's house), thus necessitating also a marked break and transfer of imagined scene at the moment of Alcumena's monologue; nor do I think that either Amphitruo or Sosia leaves the stage between vss. 551 and the greeting of Alcumena.

E. T. M.